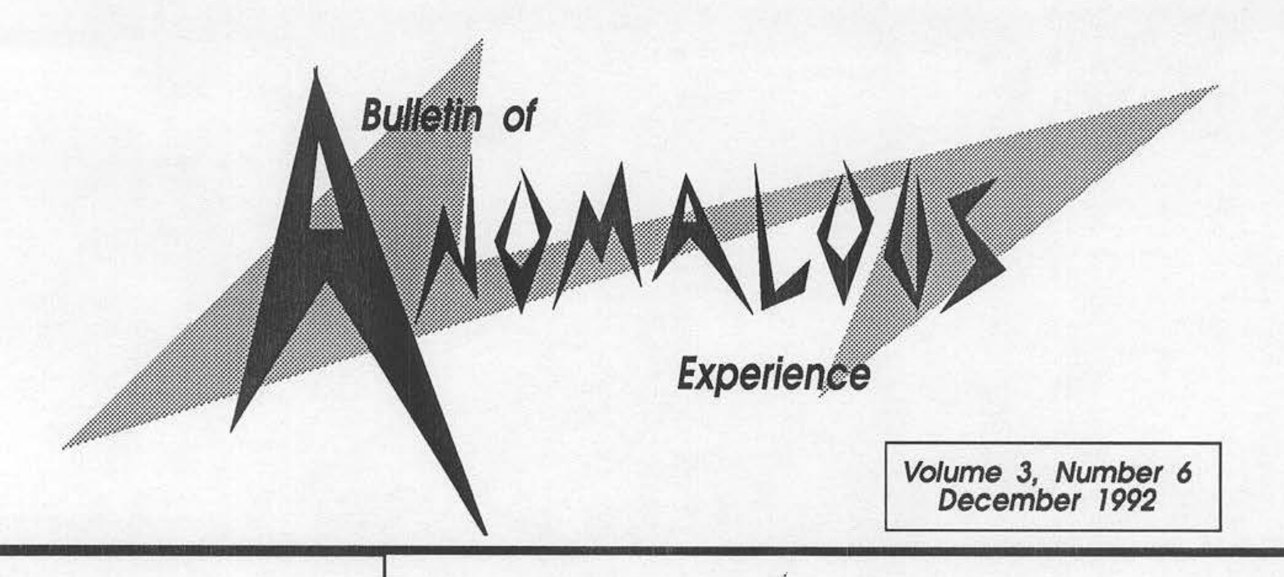
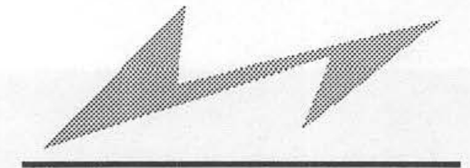


Volume 3, Number 6
December 1992

IN THIS ISSUE



Mail: Bruce Maccabee

As a result of recent events (TV shows, Roper Poll, general diffusion of information) more and more mental health professionals are becoming interested in studying people who have, or appear to have, had abduction experiences. The increased interest by mental health professionals is reflected in the articles and letters in BAE. Some (many?) of these people are "newcomers" to the field of ufology and have little or no background in the subject and are therefore content to discuss abductions in the context of being solely mentally-derived "normal" phenomena while ignoring associated physical phenomena (of which they may not be aware). Here " normal" refers to conditions or tendencies which ordinary people apparently can have without becoming part of the clinical population, for example, fantasy proneness, altered states of consciousness, old hag, temporal lobe epilepsy and suppressed memories of abuse. (These "normal aberrations" have been discussed at length in previous issues of BAE.) Some of the people who have studied ufology for years, also appear to be willing to attempt to separate abductions from physical ufo phenomena (e.g., Stacy in your last issue) thereby providing to the newcomers what I feel is an incorrect impression of the abduction phenomenon.

Newcomers should know, and "oldcomers" should remember, that there is a rich history of non-abduction literature about ufos which establishes a non-mentally generated phenomenon as the source of most UFO reports. (Here, I admit, I am rejecting the opinion stated by some that all sightings, including those which result in photographs, radar detections and landing traces are "mental phenomena" caused, perhaps, by materialization of elements of the "collective unconscious," i.e. temporary actual physical creations of the mind - "psychoids" or the UFO-equivalent of "ectoplasm.") Of particular interest are the abduction cases in which there is a continuum between the apparently objective experience of seeing a UFO (bright light or structured flying object) and the abduction experience itself. The case of Kathy Davis (Debbie Toomey) in Budd Hopkins' book Intruders is an excellent example. Physical phenomena recorded in the ground in her back yard (a sizeable area in which the grass was killed, the soil seemingly sterilized because the grass didn't grow back for a long time) during the abduction experience, plus the recollections of other members of her family at the time provide a considerable amount of evidence that something "real and physical" (whatever that means!) occurred

during the abduction. One only has to look to the "prototype" UFO abduction case, Betty and Barney Hill in 1962 (subject of The Interrupted Journey by John Fuller), to find the continuity of events between the normal world (driving home at night in the mountains of New Hampshire), the typical UFO "world" (they see a strangely behaving "star" which gets bigger and becomes a UFO) and the world of abductions (they drive off the main road, the car is stopped, they are ushered out and on board a craft by aliens,subsequently are placed into their car and continue driving). After it was over they could remember seeing the UFO and they could remember finding themselves off the main road and hearing a strange beeping noise, but that was all. When they arrived home, about two hours late, they couldn't explain the missing time, yet the missing time was also a physical aspect of their experience (while not under the influence of the UFO, i,e., driving with total consciousness, their speed was such that the distance traveled should have taken two hours less time than it actually took that night; this was a trip they had made before, so they knew how long it should have taken). The Hills made a "normal" UFO report soon after their experience and said nothing about the abduction because they weren't aware of it (until many months later after hypnotic regressions; this is an extreme abridgment of their account, the richness of which can only be appreciated by reading Fuller's book.)

The point here is that mental health professionals may wish to discuss UFO abductions as if they exist totally within the realm of competence of mental health professionals, but they do so at the risk of ignoring the wealth of evidence that UFO phenomena belong, at least in part if not in totality, to the objective physical realm. In other words, abductions could really be taking place.

(Note 1: for a description of physical events associated with one of Whitley Streiber's experiences as recounted in Communion, see "Evidence in the Physics" which is published in the Proceedings of the TREAT II conference. Note 2: the recent revelations about the crash of a UFO in the Roswell/Corona area of New Mexico, by themselves, establish a physical reality to UFOs - see Crash at Corona by Stanton Friedman and Don Berliner, and UFO: Crash at Roswell by Kevin Randle and Don Schmidt. Note 3: this discussion is related to the argument over whether or not a mental health professional should be an investigator and attempt to establish the degree of physical reality of any abduction event. To date most abduction experiences are not accompanied by evidence that could establish a physical reality, e.g., physical effects on the environment or even independent witnesses. However some are, and thus by interviewing the abductee, the mental health professional should consider investigating the possibility that there is a physical aspect to any particular abduction.)

I know that most people don't like to hear it, but it certainly seems to me from years of study and investigation that "they" - other intelligences - really are here.

Bruce Maccabee

Mail: Hilary Evans

It is good to see that serving as Editor of the MUFON Journal doesn't numb the brain to the point where it is incapable of creative thought. Stacy's hypothesis is welcome as an exciting mind-opening input to the abduction debate whether he's right or wrong.

As it happens, I think there's a very good chance that he's right ; and for much the same reasons as those which made me a supporter of Alvin Lawson's much-mocked birth trauma hypothesis. If you will forgive me quoting myself, in my book Gods, Spirits, Cosmic Guardians I wrote :

> If we are right to see the encounter experience as something like a self-administered rite of passage, and if Eliade is right in asserting that such a rite is likely to include a return-to-the-womb element, then it is by no means ridiculous to suggest that the encounter experience will incorporate elements of the regressus ad uterum. The psychodrama of the UFO abduction is simply the outer shell of the experience, chosen because of the currently available myths it happens to be the one most likely to win social acceptability; inside the public shell is the private experience, which may well take the symbolic form of a birth trauma.

Precisely the same is true of Stacy's abortion hypothesis. Here, too, we have the balance of private angst expressed in terms of public myth.

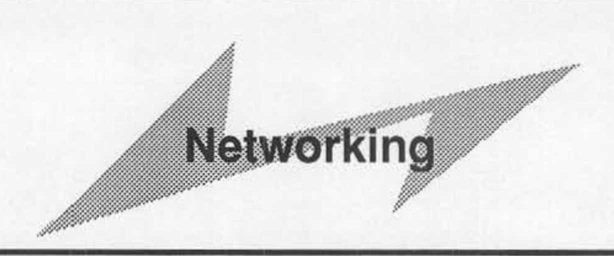
Here, too, we have a plausible interpretation of the abduction experience as 'psychological resurrection', the expression in terms of current social concerns of the same process which a hundred years ago might have resulted in religious conversion.

I am impressed by the way Stacy has anticipated objections to his hypothesis and shown that, rightly understood, they actually support his model; this is notably the case when he points to the element of conflict in the American psyche as contrasted with the more laid-back attitude in Catholic societies such as Spain and Italy.

What Stacy has done has been to demonstrate yet again, in a plausible and persuasive manner, that the abduction event, which is such nonsense when we try to see it as literal fact, makes very good sense

the individual discovers a new identity, changes the direction of his life, finds a place for himself in the scheme of things. In primitive societies this is achieved by a dramatic ritual in which a shaman leads the initiate from childhood into adulthood; in the abduction experience, the individual scripts his own psychodrama in which, in the course of playing the role of abduction victim, he gains insight as to what the future course of his life may be. And what triggers the experience is very likely to be Stacy's abortion-conflict, tipping the individual over into a crisis situation for which the abduction event provides a cathartic resolution.

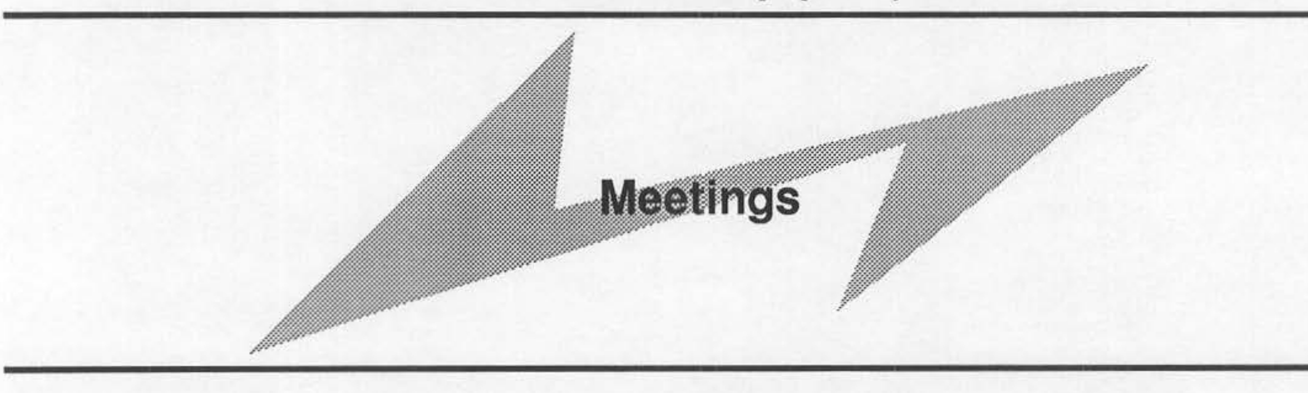
Hilary Evans



Mark Briggs, CSW, ACSW.
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(315) 475-9505.

Background: MSW in clinical social work in 1971. Board-certified Clinical Diplomate in Clinical Social work. Member of the Society of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis.

I am a licensed psychotherapist in private practice with a specialization in clinical hypnosis. I see many clients for recovery of early traumas, such as sexual abuse. I am beginning to see people with missing time and abduction-related phenomena. I welcome these referrals and would like to network with interested people in my area.



William P. LaParl, who sent along the following notice, is acting as U.S. contact for the following meeting. Write him at 19 Wood Street, Hopkinton MA 01748-1132

Seventh European Lyons Congress -- 10-11-12 April 1993

We are pleased to announce that the seventh European Lyons Congress dedicated to the scientific and objective study of UFOs is scheduled and will be held, again, in the city of Lyons, during Saturday 10th, Sunday 11th and Monday 12th April 1993. The congress will officially open with lunch on Saturday and close with lunch on Monday, thus leaving time for arrivals the first morning and departures the last afternoon.

The Congress

You may have already heard of the Lyons congress organized by the major French UFO research organisation SOS OVNI over the past six years. Although it is a European event (and neither an international or Franco-French one as we have sometimes heard), its high standards have brought interested researchers from as far as Canada, the United States, China, Russia. But researchers have also come from Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, England and from all over France. As you may know, the congress, although closed to the public, is widely open to all researchers wishing to exchange research and views in an open and objective way with fellow researchers or scientists, as the congress has hosted top French scientists and will continue to do so in the future. The congress is unique in such that, besides the official lecture program, it bares spare time, usually scarce on such occasions, for backstage chattering. That is why we believe that the French language, far from being a barrier, allows English-speaking ufologists to meet colleagues they wouldn't see in other events and who, for most, speak English anyway. The participation is submitted to prior full subscription before the deadline which, for 1993, has been fixed to February 15th.

Location of event

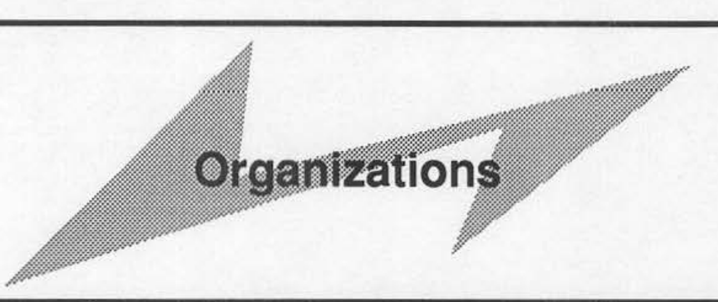
SOS OVNI has chosen the hotel which staged the 1991 and 1992 congress. Lyons has been chosen for its unique central location in Western Europe, half way between London and Rome, or Oslo and Madrid. This big picturesque city offers many facilities regarding either access or catering. The hotel is not very far from an international airport, near a major railway station and of easy access by car. It is also near a beautiful park and stores. The hotel itself, for which prices have been negotiated at their best, is a two star "luxe", offering private parking, single or double bedrooms, all air-conditioned, with colour TV, direct phone, mini bars, private bathroom and toilets. Typical (very appreciated) french cooking is served and a buffet style breakfast is offered for those resting at the hotel. The hotel is well equiped with meeting rooms, an "american bar", audio/ video equipment, fax, and so forth.

Registration

Given the difficulties to organise this 3 day stay and the engagements taken with the hotel which permit special prices, the deadline for inscription has been fixed to February 15th 1993. We must have received, by that date, complete registration, including beds, meals and subscription fees.

If you have any particular problem regarding this deadline, please give us a call and we will try to solve it together.

Please note that the sum of 200 ff is an obligatory participation covering the cost of proceedings and congress rooms. It is by no means a deposit for reservation of rooms or meals. We will not be able to deal with registration forms undetailed, uncomplete or arriving after the 15th February.



I learned about The New Being Project from the WELL computer conferencing system, where selected articles from BAE appear. The following is taken from their brochure.

The New Being Project

If you or anyone you know are having extraordinary experiences which suggest you or s/he may be an evolutionary "edgeling", please read this.

Most leading theories now agree that evolution is a far-from-equilibrium system and often proceeds in long largo and short prestissimo movements. Many indicators suggest that a sudden organic leap, one of those prestissimo climaxes, may occur in our species within the next 25 years. Some observers say that many rapidly accelerating phenomena and "triggering" crises indicate that it's already in progress. The "end of human history" as we know it may be in sight.

Such a rapid shift (or shifts) may have short and long term effects ranging from profoundly beneficial to calamitous, depending on your viewpoint. Ilya Prigogine's work with "dissipative structures" intimates that a sudden plunge into chaos could precede our surge forward to re-organize at a higher level of complexity...

...The leap could be as far-reaching as the rapid jump from asexual to sexual reproduction or the remarkably quick enlargement of the cerebral cortex which led to self-reflective awareness. If a change such as we're suggesting is happening, the rules and modes of further evolution of our species may themselves change in ways we can't imagine. By 2050 we may legitimately call ourselves new beings -- homo noeticus.

What's Happening?

We're persuaded that something is happening. Fast. Credible signals abound. We have environmental crises coupled with a population explosion. These two are classic precursors of an evolutionary jump. Our numbers have doubled, from 2.5 billion to 5 billion, in only 40 years, and the growth curve continues to accelerate. Then, consider the implications of mushrooming global communication and information. How about the rapid spread of consciousness-expanding techniques? Some scientists claim there are unused functions in the human brain and ductless glands (the pineal, for instance) which could be rapidly activated given certain stimuli. Not to mention the scary possibilities in genetic engineering.

Who May Be "Edgelings"?

Here's a list of possibilities:

- Adepts in various contemplative traditions who access exotic powers such as the Tibetan tumo (the ability to generate heat from within the body, enough to dry out a soaking wet sheet worn in a very cold room in an hour or so.) There are also the Siddhis of the Yogic tradition, the "little miracles" like levitation or spontaneous healing ability that often occur on the way to enlightenment.
- People in deep existential or psychological crisis, some of whom may be going through so-called "acute psychosis" or "spiritual emergency"...
- People with various illnesses that can cause radical consciousness modifications: e.g. epilepsy, severe hypoglycemia, chronic fatigue syndrome, etc.
- Adults and children with psychogenic wounds or physical anomalies (stigmata, missing pregnancies)
- Athletes who get "in the zone" and exceed their previous performance dramatically, or masters of martial arts, like Aikido, who've been filmed making "impossible" moves. (In one frame of the film, the Master is surrounded by attackers. In the next frame, 1/18 second later, he's two feet away. No leap, no blur of movement in either frame.)
- ....Contactees and/or abductees by "extra-" or "ultra-" terrestrials or other kinds of "visitors" who now and then appear in mythic or archetypal guise. (These intelligences may sometimes bounce in and out of several kinds of "terrestriality", or be in more than one at the same time. We're not True Believers in any single explanation for this diverse phenomenon.)
- Near-death experiencers, some of whom feel like very new beings indeed after their arresting and illuminating encounters on "the other side."
- Some creative geniuses
- Savant syndrome people.
- ....Water-birth children, some of whom are reported to have striking paranormal capacities.

The New Being Project's Job

We call it "E.T." for Evolutionary Transformation, knowing that making fun will keep our heads on straight while we dig deep into data that's easily as momentous as Deep Ecology.

Our first, and continuous task is to gather information on "E.T." from every source we can find, inspect all the hard and semi-hard data and listen to ALL speculations no matter how far out on the fringes of reason they seem.

Our second task is to put out the call to individuals who are encountering "E.T." either physically or in ways that affect cognitive and affective processes or all three. For instance, we have some friends with excellent sanity credentials and obviously skeptical minds. Nevertheless, they tell us of powerful physical and emotional episodes in which they sense themselves being "rewired", sometimes neurologically, for an unknown purpose. These "re-wirings" occur during occasional, unbidden "mergings" with intelligences very different from our own. Could these people be in transition; their extraordinary experiences "the budding limbs and organs of our future nature" (Michael Murphy)?

We want to develop ways to help validate our friends' and others' experiences both for themselves (often enough they fear they're nuts) and for the "consensus reality". Some possibilities include: putting our friends, above, together with others of like background for a weekend of intense focusing on possible synergetic effects, complete with physiological monitoring; forming networks and self-help groups for those going through "E.T."; creating videos to educate about the change(s) happening to us; researching the special "electrical sensitivity" reported to spring up right after near-death experiences and UFO contacts or abductions. Do these events rig people with "more sail to the wind" as Dr. Wayne London so aptly puts it? This last is the study we're currently undertaking (January '92). Any or all of these could lead us to ways we can collaborate with or even modify the course of "E.T." to everyone's benefit. Modify evolution??? Such a prospect is staggering! Are we ready? Can we afford not to be ready?

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From the Medical Literature

Paranormal Experiences in the General Population

Colin A Ross MD and Shaun Joshi
J Nerv Ment Dis 180:357:361, 1992

Abstract
The Dissociative Disorders Interview Schedule was administered to a random sample of 502 adults in the general population of Winnipeg, a midwestern Canadian city. Results showed that paranormal/extrasensory experiences were common in the general population. They were linked to a history of childhood trauma and to other dissociative symptom clusters. A factor analysis of the paranormal experiences identified three factors which together accounted for 44.0% of the combined variance of the scores. A model is proposed in which paranormal experiences are conceptualized as an aspect of normal dissociation. Like dissociation in general, paranormal experiences can be triggered by trauma, especially childhood physical or sexual abuse. Such experiences discriminate individuals with childhood trauma histories from those without at high levels of significance.

from the article
In previous studies with clinical populations, the number of paranormal experiences reported has always been highest in the group with the greatest degree of childhood trauma. Since multiple personality disorder (MPD) patients report the most severe trauma of any group surveyed to date, this set of experiences diagnostically discriminates MPD from other disorders. In the one study conducted in a nonclinical population, however, it was evident that there are psychic individuals who have not been abused as children and who are free of overt psychopathology. It was, therefore, uncertain whether the relationship between childhood trauma,

Prevalence of Extrasensory/Paranormal Experience in the General Population

Experience	%positive in present study (N=502)	% positive in 1990 Gallup Poll (N=1236)	P
Mental Telepathy	15.6	25.0	0.00006
Precognition	5.8	---	
Telekenesis	1.0	---	
Precognitive Dreams	17.8	---	
Deja Vu	54.6	56.0	NS
Posessed by a demon	0.6	---	
Posessed by a dead person	0.2	---	
Posessed by a living person	1.0	---	
Posessed by some other power or force	1.4	---	
Contact with ghosts	5.2	9.0	0.01
Contact with Poltergeists	2.2	---	
Contact with spirits of any kind	4.4		
Knowledge of past lives	4.0	8.0	.004
Trance channeling	---	2.0	

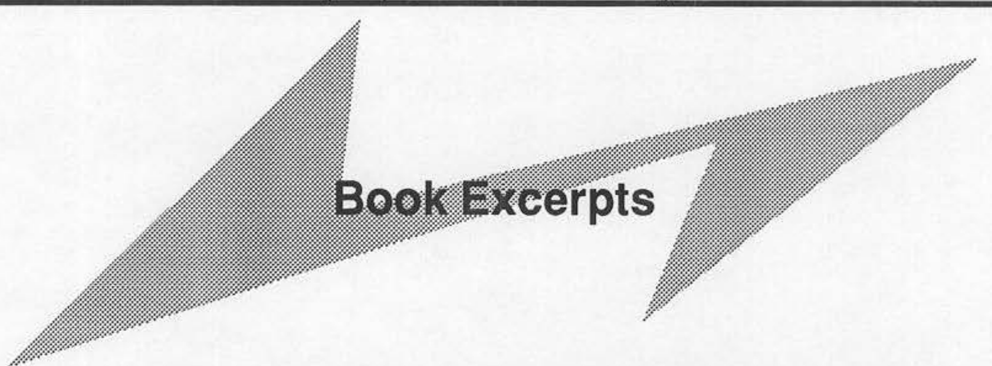
paranormal experiences, and other dissociative symptom clusters holds in the general population. To investigate this matter, we administered the DDIS to a random sample of the general population in the city of Winnipeg, a midwestern Canadian city with a greater metropolitan population of 650,000. ... To study paranormal experiences scientifically, it is not necessary to make any decision as to whether some, all, or none of them are objectively real. They can be studied for their clinical correlates like any other set of data.

... The available evidence, including the present study, suggests that paranormal experiences are dissociative in nature and linked to childhood trauma and other dissociative symptom clusters. The dissociative nature of paranormal experiences in he general population is supported by our Pearson correlations, the findings of the regression analysis, and the fact that they are much more common among individuals reporting childhood abuse. It is also clear from pervious work that paranormal expenses are not necessarily pathological in nature. They are often deliberately cultivated by psychologically healthy, high-functioning individuals. We propose a model in which paranormal experiences are an expression of normal dissociative capacity. They can occur in highly dissociative individuals who are healthy and who have never been traumatized. Like dissociation in general, however, paranormal experiences can be activated by trauma, especially chronic childhood abuse. This is why paranormal experiences are more common among individuals who have been abused as children, and why they discriminate the most highly traumatized clinical group, MPD, from other diagnostic categories. ... It is evident from our principal components analysis that paranormal experiences are not unitary in nature, and this must be borne in mind in any future studies. ...

Commentary: Paranormal Experiences in the General Population

David J. Hufford, Ph.D.

...These are just a few glimpses of the remarkable dysjunction between official psychiatric reality and the increasingly widespread view in modern society -- including substantial numbers of professionals--that the world is still an enchanted place long after Weber declared the secularization of the Western world complete. No doubt many explanations come readily to hand: disillusionment with the utopian hopes of technology, the much discussed inadequacy of modern science education, and so forth. Some such factors may be at work, but this is a cultural situation of enormous magnitude at which we should not simply throw convenient excuses. It is an empirical, investigable situation that contradicts many of the most cherished theories of modern social and psychological science. It is not a fringe phenomenon. Elements of this clearly touch every segment of modern society, and many of the beliefs under discussion are more common among better educated Americans. (Gallup and Proctor, 1982). Ross has done us are real service in stating repeatedly in his work that "to study paranormal experiences scientifically, it is not necessary to make any decision as to whether some, all, or none of the mare objectively real." Getting bogged down in highly emotional exchanges about essential reality is not useful, and it diverts attention from the investigable issues. It is in the phenomenology of experience that therapists and patients with dramatically different beliefs and interpretations can find a common ground for cooperative clinical efforts.



Ronald Siegel's book on hallucinations is a compelling read, though I found it a bit too popular for my taste. It does effectively convey the experiencer's complete and utter conviction that these things are, indeed, happening in event-level reality. Understanding of "hallucinations" seems to me to be essential to one's ability to make an accurate differential diagnosis of truly anomalous experiences (though I suppose some would argue that all anomalous experiences are really hallucinations), and for this reason it's another entry in my "must-read" list for those working in the field of anomalous experiences.

Siegel has the opportunity (some would say, the luxury) of spending copious amounts of time with the individuals he describes -- not just listening to their stories, but sharing their work and home environment, eating their food, sharing their stresses. He not only observes but also experiences their lives as closely as he can manage, in order to gain a deep understanding of his subjects. In this way he builds a powerful rapport, so that when he delivers his opinion that the individual is hallucinating, they react with appreciation at best, and equanimity at worst. His subjects know that he cares, and they respect his opinion. He does not report his subjects feeling devalued and rejected, or reacting with defensiveness.

I finished the book feeling enlightened but frustrated -- enlightened that I had been given a glimpse into the experience of hallucinations, but frustrated with the sense that communicating to a patient that I believed he or she was hallucinating required laboriously building a foundation of trust and rapport. Upon further reflection, I suppose that's one of the primary tasks of all therapy.

Fire In The Brain: Clinical Tales of Hallucination

Ronald K. Siegel

New York: Dutton, 1992

From my base at the UCLA School of Medicine, where I became an associate research professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, I conducted extensive clinical research using drugs, sensory isolation rooms, and other methods to induce hallucinations in volunteers. I

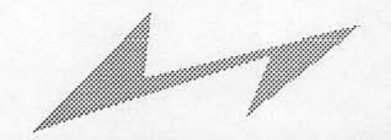
co-edited a medical text on hallucinations, then wrote a series of articles in several popular magazines. Soon people were flocking to my lab to report their hallucinatory experiences. I devoted many years to collecting their reports and studying them under controlled conditions. I traveled around the world examining rare cases of hallucinations in high altitude climbers, religious mystics, and even hostage victims. At UCLA I worked with psychiatric patients but found many others who experienced hallucinations, including a surgical patient who got up off the table to chase a ghost, a famous Hollywood actress who saw voodoo people throwing darts at her whenever camera lights were turned on, and a departmental colleague who confessed that for twenty-five years she had been working with two imaginary research assistants. And in my private forensic practice, where I was called upon as an expert witness in criminal trials around the world, I was able to study people who experienced hallucinations in situations of kidnapping, rape, and torture. I always began by asking people to describe their experiences, to share the sensory impressions as recorded by the camera of their mind's eye, ears, and other senses. In other words, I asked them to take me on their trip. The cases collected in this book examine these hallucinatory worlds through the eyes and senses of those who have taken the trips. But the cases I have selected are more than mere descriptions; they are illustrative of the underlying causes and mechanisms for these amazing perceptions. In order to further understand how the hallucinating brain can control behavior, I gave everyone complete batteries of psychological and physical tests, interviewed friends and family members, and observed the individual for weeks or months. Sometimes it was necessary to actually live with the patients in their homes or hospital rooms, or take my portable equipment and accompany them on dangerous outings in order to catch them in the act of hallucinating. In most cases I could relate the experiences to the vast body of medical literature describing hallucinations. But sometimes the experiences were so unique that I had to use unusual diagnostic approaches and take the trip myself in order to understand it. For example, when an ex-POW told me about some particularly strange visions he had had while locked inside a tiger cage in Vietnam, I had myself locked inside a similar cage for several days in order to understand just what happened to him. A common theme in all these cases is the perceived reality of the hallucination, which allows it to influence the lives of the individual patients and subjects. Unlike others who may have similar experiences but judge them to be unreal, the people portrayed here all believed what they saw and heard. Their behavior changed as they struggled to cope with the strange perceptions. The hallucinations may have been born out of their brains, but once released they caused the people to act as if such things actually existed in the world outside. They walked, talked, played, and even made love with their hallucinations. In a sense, the hallucinations became alive, they became waking dreams. By examining their descriptions and behavior we, too, can see and hear them. And what they show and tell us is that under the right conditions anyone can hallucinate. In the province of the mind, the border between hallucinations and reality is easy to cross.

...In the past, hallucinations were often regarded as the exclusive domain of the insane. Through the research and cases in this book, we begin to understand that anyone can have them. They arise from common structures in the brain and nervous system, common biological experiences, and common reactions of the brain to stimulation or deprivation. The resultant images may be bizarre, but they are not necessarily crazy. They are simply based on stored images in our own brains. Like a mirage that shows a magnificent city on a desolate expanse of ocean or desert, the images of hallucinations are actually reflected images of real objects located elsewhere. The city is no less real and no less worthy of study because it is not where we think it is. This book is a visit to those captivating cities of the mind.

...There have been a number of surveys indicating that not only are hallucinations common in the normal population, but the number of people reporting them is increasing. In a census taken in 1894, approximately 10 percent of the population reported hallucinatory experiences of one type or another. A 1957 study of normal people by famed British psychologist Peter McKellar found that 25 percent of the people questioned had had at least one hallucinatory experience. My own international questionnaire, distributed by Omni in 1988, revealed a startling escalation. Fully 79 percent of the respondents reported hallucinations. Furthermore, more than a third said that they had been fooled by their hallucinations into thinking they were real events. The average age of these respondents, representing equal numbers of men and women, was thirty-three years, and most were well-educated with more than four years of college. While all of these surveys varied in methods and populations sampled, a 1990 census, using methods and samples similar to the 1894 census, found a 50-percent increase in the incidence of hallucinations.

...Current philosophical and psychological wisdom holds that there are certain properties or qualities that separate real perceptions from mental images, thoughts, fantasies, memories, and dreams. Real perceptions are more vivid, concrete, coherent, and vivacious than the rest. They have a quality of sensation whereby they produce the immediate feeling that something is seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted, as opposed to something imagined. Real perceptions convey the impression that the stimulus is external, that it exists, even if no one else perceives it. Furthermore, real perceptions are impossible or extremely difficult to alter or dismiss simply by wishing. When a mental event acquires these qualities, it becomes indistinguishable from a real perception. Henry Maudsley, a famous psychiatrist in London during the time when Conan Doyle was writing the Sherlock Holmes stories, had an apt phrase that captured the impact of these qualities. An hallucination, Maudsley wrote, is "mental representation so intense as to become mental presentation." He noted that there were fine lines between mental experiences such as thoughts, fantasies, dreams, and hallucinations. These experiences can evolve into one another. For example, a dream, on awakening, may evolve into an hallucination; a thought, on failing asleep, may evolve into a dream. One can move along this continuum because the internal mechanisms of the experiences are similar.

...Originally, I thought that ... EEG studies had been a monumental waste. Many years later, a colleague told me about Ruth, a psychiatric patient who was tested in a similar way while she was hallucinating. When Ruth said she was seeing an hallucination of her daughter, her visual-evoked responses to a flashing light were reduced. In other words, her brain was reacting as if something (the hallucinatory image) was partially blocking her vision of the flashing light. I dug out Nancy's original records and compared them with Ruth's. The diminished evoked responses obtained when Nancy was seeing Chopsticks and when Ruth was hallucinating her daughter were similar, although Ruth showed the more dramatic effect. Both Nancy's and Ruth's brains were reacting to their hallucinatory images as if they were real perceptions. Neurophysiological researchers have now confirmed that there is a similarity between processes underlying visual perception and those occurring while vivid visual imagery takes place. When a visual image arises in the brain, impulses activate retinal elements, excite muscles in the eye, and suppress some of the brain's own bioelectric activity, including evoked responses. Since perceptions of real objects involve the same mechanisms, the strength of these stimulations, coupled with feedback mechanisms between the eye and brain, can transform a visual image of the imagination into a visual image of perception. In other words, an imaginary dragon like Chopsticks can become vivid enough to fool the brain into thinking it has seen something real.



"Looking for the Aliens", the latest book by Jenny Randles and Peter Hough, focuses on exactly that question. UFO sightings and abductions are discussed, but so are science fiction and horror writing, SETI, and channelling. The book addresses not only the nature of the search and what has been discovered so far, but also the question of the meaning of "alien", "other", and why that should be so intriguing for us at all. Highly recommended

Looking for the Aliens

Peter Hough & Jenny Randles(1991),
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Recent history has added one more photograph to our list of aliens preserved on celluloid. And this is a real puzzle.

On 1 December 1987, former police officer Philip Spencer set out in the early morning to walk across Ilkley Moor, in Yorkshire, England. He carried with him a compass and a camera, intending to photograph Ilkley town from the top of the moor. At a place called White Wells, rife with folklore associations, something caught his attention and he spun round to see a small 'creature', some 10 feet (3 metres) away. Spencer shouted, raised his camera, and the creature scuttled towards a bluff, then stopped and made a dismissive motion with its right arm. It was at this moment that Spencer pressed the shutter button on his camera.

Then he chased after the creature, which had disappeared around the bluff. Turning the corner, Spencer was confronted with a hovering silver disc which shot up into the clouds and disappeared. Instead of continuing his journey, he returned to Ilkley, where he was confused even further to discover that almost two hours had disappeared out of his life.

The photograph, taken on 400 ASA film with a Prinz Mastermatic 35 mm camera, was underexposed and slightly fuzzy due to camera shake. But it shows a small green figure with ape-like arms and strangely jointed legs. Spencer added to the description by telling us it had large ears and three digits on each hand. At face value, one might presume this is just another hoax. For instance, the fuzzy picture is what one might expect if a hoaxer wanted to hide what in reality might be a crude dummy of some sort. Conversely given that the witness had no time to set up his camera for the correct lighting conditions, one might equally have been suspicious if the print had been crystal clear! But this is a very complex case in which we have both been closely involved.

...During the intense investigation which followed the alleged incident, we have been assisted by scientists from the University of Manchester, three photographic specialists, including one from Kodak, and a clinical psychologist.

...It has to be said that all of our investigations so far have led to ambiguous results. There is nothing clear-cut to prove that the photograph is of a genuine 'alien' creature, nor is there any evidence to prove it is a hoax. Measurements show that the figure was around 4 foot 6 inches (1.4 metres) tall: a sizable dummy to drag up a very steep incline on to the top of the moors, photograph, then drag back again. Also, Philip Spencer, actually a psuedonym, appears to lack the normal motivations of a hoaxer. This former policeman had made it quite clear that his real identity must never be revealed. At the time he was thinking of reapplying to join the police force, and now holds a senior management position with an American company operating in Britain. He is acutely aware that the release of his identity - the picture has attracted a certain amount of media attention - could ruin him professionally and socially. Most hoaxers want their picture and names in the papers. Secondly, hoaxers usually show interest in making money out of their claims. Philip has always refused to accept any recompense in connection with the case, even though, at the time, it would have been welcome to him. The incident cuts much deeper than a 'mere' sighting of a UFO. The only hoax scenario which makes sense to us, would be if Spencer were acting as a 'front man' for a group out to test and discredit ufologists. When we put this to him, Spencer just shrugged and said: 'I don't see the point in that. I've got better things to do with my time.' It came as no surprise to us when hypnotic regression revealed an abduction scenario by 'aliens' aboard the alleged spacecraft to fill in the missing time. We also discovered that the photograph was now 'remembered' as being taken after the abduction, which had been wiped from his conscious mind. This would clarify some of the discrepancies noted with the story. Jim Singleton, the clinical psychologist who carried out the hypnosis, found Spencer to be a balanced, sensitive individual. He is as certain as he can be that Spencer was genuinely under hypnosis. More than this, Singleton stated that Spencer recounted his experience in exactly the same way as his clinical

patients who have suffered genuine traumatic experiences. However, the case stands or falls by the unique photograph. The Daily Star newspaper first presented it as a UFO puzzle (without the consent or knowledge of the witness or ourselves). When a complaint was lodged, it subsequently explained the figure away - quite absurdly - as an insurance salesman carrying a brief-case, supplying a picture to prove this. This man later admitted to us that the comparative photograph had been set up by the Star. He did not claim that he was the alien! The British Journal of Photography, in its February 1990 issue, also poked fun at the matter. All we can say is that the case remains unresolved and that these rather feeble attempts to dismiss it have not helped clarify the matter if it is a hoax, it is a clever one. If it is genuine, then it may be unprecedented. We can merely offer the facts, reserve judgement and suggest that you decide for yourselves.

[Writer Ramsey Campbell in conversation with the authors:] The alien theme does not just emanate through the science fiction genre, but is alive and kicking within the literature of horror too, albeit often in disguise. Do you agree? 'Yes, I do indeed! There's been a process through the twentieth century emerging at the point of Lovecraft, where horror became science fiction and vice versa. There's a strong argument that Mary Shelley straddled that gap too. One of the crucial things about Frankenstein is that the monster becomes more and more identifiable with its creator. When the moment arrives where Frankenstein comes face to face with the monster, we realize it is his alter ego. One of the central issues of horror, is not so much the monster - the alien - per se, but the idea that it is something about ourselves. I believe it is a crucial element within us which has not yet been identified.' Didn't Lovecraft see it more in conventional terms? The Cthulhu mythos is a body of literature of a race of banished aliens who occasionally break through and confront individuals in their attempt to regain control of our reality. 'There is an oft-quoted piece of text which says: "All my stories, unconnected as they may be, are based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practising black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of this earth again." 'I think it is pretty well established that that wasn't Lovecraft's own statement, but something created by August Derleth - who I must say I have nothing but respect and great gratitude for. He has promoted me as a writer. But I think there was a problem here because Derleth was a Christian, and Lovecraft was an atheist.'

Notable Quotations

New Year's Housecleaning: Provocative quotations I have encountered in my readings over the last year, but never got around to including.

What, then, is the meaning of it all? What can we say to dispel the mystery of existence? If we take everything into account -- not only what the ancients knew, but all of what we know today that they didn't know -- then I think we must frankly admit that we do not know. But in admitting this, we have probably found the open channel. This is not a new idea; this is the idea of the age of reason. This is the philosophy that guided the men who made the democracy that we live under. The idea that no one really know how to run a government led to the idea that we should arrange a system by which new ideas could be developed, tried out, and tossed out if necessary, with more new ideas brought in -- a trial-and-error system. The method was a result of the fact that science was already showing itself to be a successful venture at the end of the eighteenth century. Even then it was clear to socially minded people that the openness of possibilities was an opportunity, and that doubt and discussion were essential to progress into the unknown. If we want to solve a problem that we have never solved before, we must leave the door to the unknown ajar. We are at the very beginning of time for the human race. It is not unreasonable that we grapple with problems., But there are tens of thousands of years in the future. Our responsibility is to do what we can, learn what we can, improve the solutions, and pass them on. It is our responsibility to leave the people of the future a free hand. In the impetuous youth of humanity, we can make grave errors that can stunt our growth for a long time. This we will do if we say we have the answers now, so young and ignorant as we are. If we suppress all discussion, all criticism, proclaiming, "This is the answer, my friends; man is saved!" we will doom humanity for a long time to the chains of authority, confined to the limits of our present imagination. It has been done so many times before. It is our responsibility as scientists, knowing the great progress which comes from a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance, the great progress which is the fruit of freedom of thought, to proclaim the value of this freedom; to teach how doubt is not to be feared but welcomed and discussed; and to demand this freedom as our duty to all coming generations.

Richard Feynman, "What Do You Care What Other People Think?"

Wherever the psyche is set violently oscillating by a numinous experience, there is a danger that the thread by which one hangs may be torn. Should that happen, one man tumbles into an absolute affirmation, another into an equally absolute negation. Nirdvandva (freedom from opposites) is the Orient's remedy for this. I have not forgotten that. The pendulum of the mind oscillates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong. The numinosum is dangerous because it lures men to extremes, so that a modest truth is regarded as the

truth and a minor mistake is equated with fatal error. Tout passe -- yesterday's truth is today's deception, and yesterday's false inference may be tomorrow's revelation. This is particularly true in psychological matters, of which, if truth were told, we still know very little. We are still a long way from understanding what it signifies that nothing has any existence unless some small -- and oh, so transitory -- consciousness has become aware of it.
Memories, Dreams, Reflections by C.G. Jung

Since the unconscious, as the result of its spatio-temporal relativity, possesses better sources of information than the conscious mind -- which has only sense perceptions available to it -- we are dependent for our myth of life after death upon the meager hints of dreams and similar spontaneous revelations from the unconscious. As I have already said, we cannot attribute to thse allusions the value of knowledge, let alone proof. They can, however, serve as suitable bases for mythic amplifications; they give the probing intellect the raw material which is indispensible for its vitality. Cut off the intermediary world of mythic imagination, and the mind falls prey to doctrinaire rigidities. On the other hand, too much traffic with these germs of myth is dangerous for weak and suggestible minds, for they are led to mistake vague intimations for substantial knowledge, and to hypostatize mere phantasms.
Memories, Dreams, Reflections by C.G. Jung

Occasionally, by the way, I get a letter from someone who is in "contact" with an extraterrestrial who invites me to "ask anything." And so I have a list of questions. The extraterrestrials are well advanced, remember. So I ask things like "Please give a short proof of Fermat's Last Theorem." Or the Goldbach Conjecture. And then I have to explain what these are, because extraterrestrials will not call it Fermat's Last Theorem, so I write out the little equation with the exponents. I never get an answer. On the other hand, if I ask something like "Should we humans be good?" I always get an answer., I think something can be deduced from this differential ability to answer questions. Anything vague they are extremely happy to respond to, but anything specific, where there is a chance to find out if they actually know anything, there is only silence.
Carl Sagan, "The Burden of Skepticism" (1987), Not Necessarily the New Age: Critical Essays (1988) edited by Robert Basil.

To suffer one's confusion is the first step in healing. Then the pain of contradiction is transformed into the mystery of paradox. The capacity for paradox is the measure of spiritual strength and the surest sign of maturity.
Robert Johnson

Experiencers' Section

Some months ago, when we opened up the subscription list to experiencers, we also decided to invite them to contribute comments, which we would present in a separate section. Here is the first of these contributions.

I am happy that you have opened your circulation, albeit discreetly, to experiencers. As an experiencer who attended last spring's conference in Boston, I have grave concerns about the ability of any professional or semi-professional body to decipher what is in my best interest without my participation. I understand that some people took heat about the decision to include experiencers for the entire meeting. I must respond to this, and any other objection that such gatherings and publications are best left closed to the experiencer.

May I remind your readership of my words at that meeting: that the experiencers there represented a triply courageous sampling of humanity. 1) They have submitted to examination by forces as yet unknowable. 2) In an effort to ascribe meaning to their experience, they have undertaken a painful process of self-examination. 3) In order to gain further insight and to ennoble our understanding of human experience, they have presented themselves for investigation and examination by their fellow-being. I must stress very strongly that no matter whether one is scientist, therapist or investigator, any attempt to decipher the meaning of the abduction phenomenon through the co-operaation of an experiencer constitutes what I perceive as <u>human experimentation.</u>

I heard much at that conference which shook my confidence in many scientists and investigators. There seemed to be an inability on the part of many "experts" to acknowledge that the true "experts" in this field are not themselves, but the experiencers. The reason for this is simple: objective investigation cannot reveal the "why" of the experience, only the "how". In a conundrum of this magnitude, the compelling question, the one with the deepest significance, is "Why is this happening?". This is a subjective question with which every experiencer must wrestle. It is the question which shapes and changes their lives, and therefore alters the totality of human experience. I submit that, investigate as we amy, the only person who can tell you the meaning of this experience, the "why", is the experiencer. The answer to that question, if it is apparent to the individual, is in turn a tiny dot on the halftone screen which comprises the total picture: the meaning of the experience for humanity.

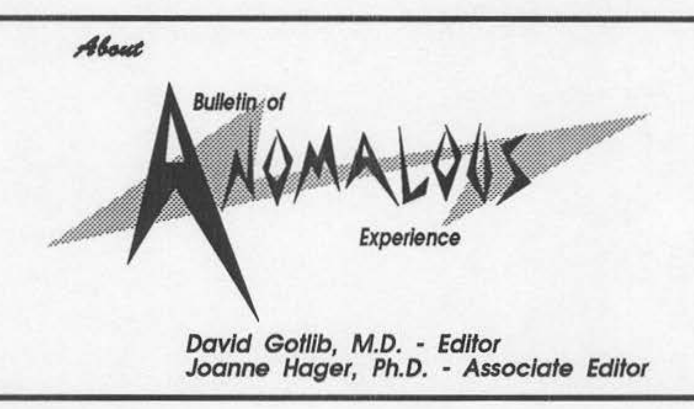
We will be that much poorer in our understanding if we do not acknowledge this and alter our methods of investigation and review accordingly. We need an appreciation and understanding of the dual nature of this experience: of its objective and subjective meanings. I cannot see how we will arrive at this if so-called experts are permitted to convene and make pronouncements about us in our absence.

I was glad to have the chance to make my voice heard at that conference. What I saw there was the alarming potential (and what seemed an earnest desire in some) for my experience to be pigeon-holed, categorized, labelled and sanitized for the comfortable consumption of a large scientific and lay community. I submit that it ain't that simple or convenient, folks. As a human "experimental animal" on two planes, I have no intention of allowing myself or my kind to be prodded, manipulated and wilfully misunderstood by my own species (as I can be by the others).

Individual and collective attempts to understand the abduction phenomenon require standards and methods which far exceed the criteria set for traditional "hard science". The subjects of study are human beings, and since the Milgram experiment, there have been few updates on guidelines for human experimentation. Successful and proper investigation of the abduction phenomenon will require, quite literally, a revolution in human thought in order to satify the requirements of both empirical science and the needs of the experiencer. I challenge all parties to construct a rigorous, unbiasd, compassionate and co-operative investigational model and code of ethics. The seeds of this were planted last spring. Please let us not permit them to languish in the backwater of hidebound thought and territorial defense.

Chris McLachlan

About



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Bulletin of Anomalous Experience is a networking newsletter about the UFO abduction phenomenon and related issues, for mental health professionals and interested scientists. As Hilary Evans has observed, we try to "comfortably tread the narrow path between the groves of academia and the dust and heat of the marketplace, inquiring and suggesting, not asserting or insisting." Distribution has traditionally been limited to mental health professionals and interested scientists. We have recently decided to open up subscriptions to experiencers as well, on a trial basis (as discussed in the results of a recent Virtual Conference).

Subscriptions

The costs for subscriptions and back issues goes up as of the 1993 issue: Subscriptions are now $25 per calendar year; sets of back issues for 1990 and 1991 are available at $20 per year. (I have held the line on subscriptions for the three years BAE has been in operation, despite three increases in postal fees in Canada and numerous other cost increases. This is still a non-profit operation, despite the fee increase!) Make cheques payable to "David Gotlib, M.D.," not to the Bulletin.

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The Spirit of BAE If you are sending me correspondence regarding items in BAE, or a contribution for publication, unless you clearly state to the contrary I am assuming that you are providing permission to print all or part of it here (at my discretion). If you wish to send me a confidential or personal letter, that's fine too, but please specify in your letter that it is not to be printed. (Most of the time this is obvious, but better safe than sorry). Lengthy contributions are also welcome on IBM-compatible diskettes (5.25 or 3.5 inch). I am currently running Word for Windows 2.0, but I can work with WordPerfect 5.0 and ASCII (text) files.

BAE on the WELL

A selection from articles from BAE appears in the "mind" conference of the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link) conferencing system. If you do not wish your contributions to appear on the WELL, please indicate so with your submission.

How to Reach Me

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